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LETTER DATED 20 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached letter, dated 18 August 1997, which I have received from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee established pursuant to the mandate of the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB).

Attached to the letter is the first periodic report of the Member States participating in MISAB, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1125 (1997) of 6 August 1997.

I should be grateful if you would bring the attached letter and its enclosure to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 18 August 1997 from the Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

I have the honour to transmit the first report, covering the period from 6 to 18 August 1997, requested by the Security Council in paragraph 6 of resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic.

(Signed) General Amadou Toumani TOURÉ
Chairman of the International
Monitoring Committee

Enclosure

First report to the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1125 (1997) concerning the situation in the Central African Republic

(18 August 1997)

INTRODUCTION

1. On 6 August 1997, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1125 (1997), in which it approved the continued conduct by Member States participating in the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) of the operation to achieve its objective to facilitate the return to peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the Bangui Agreements. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council authorized the Member States participating in MISAB and those States providing logistical support to ensure the security and freedom of movement of their personnel. It decided that that authorization would be limited to an initial period of three months, after which the Council would assess the situation on the basis of the reports submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations at least every two weeks by the Member States participating in MISAB.

2. This is the first such report, which the Security Council requested the Member States participating in MISAB to provide within 14 days after the adoption of resolution 1125 (1997). It was prepared by the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, which includes the representatives of the States members of the International Mediation Committee (Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali), in collaboration with the MISAB Command, which consists of high-ranking officers representing all of the Member States participating in MISAB, including Senegal and Togo.

3. This report, in addition to providing a brief introduction to MISAB and its operations, describes developments in the situation in the Central African Republic from 6 August 1997, when resolution 1125 (1997) was adopted, to the present.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

4. Both the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements are under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, former President of the Republic of Mali, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee and personal representative of the heads of State concerned.

5. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, chaired by General Touré, includes one representative of each of the four heads of State of the members of the International Mediation

Committee, as well as a consultant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who acts as a diplomatic adviser to the Committee.

6. Thus, the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of th Bangui Agreements is the body which directs the actions of MISAB, since it receives the necessary political guidance directly from the heads of State concerned, and especially from the President of the Gabonese Republic, who is Chairman of the International Mediation Committee. As such, it is the negotiating body among the various parties to the Central African crisis (President of the Republic, Government, presidential majority, group of 11 opposition political parties, moderate opposition parties or CODEPO, centrists, former rebels, loyalist members of the armed forces, trade unions, civil society). As its name indicates, the International Monitoring Committee is primarily responsible for the political monitoring of the Bangui Agreements.

7. The International Monitoring Committee has adopted a plan of action which reflects the gist of the main provisions of the Bangui Agreements in the form of a timetable, which can be outlined as follows:

- Formation of a government of national union;

- Adoption of an amnesty law covering those who committed offences in the context of the third rebellion;

- Disarmament (surrender of weapons by the former rebels in honour and dignity, and recovery of weapons by MISAB from militias and civilian populations);

- Implementation of the recommendations of the General Meeting on National Defence;

- Situation of former heads of State;

- Suspension of the parliamentary audit;

- Final phase of national reconciliation through a number of actions aimed at consolidating peace and security (organization of regional and sectoral awareness-raising seminars, organization of a National Reconciliation Conference, elaboration of an electoral code, access by political parties to the State media and other measures).

8. MISAB is under the patronage of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, Senior Head of State of the International Mediation Committee. It is under the political authority of General Amadou Toumani Touré, Chairman of the International Monitoring Committee. While it was initially under the command of Brigadier General Edjo Edouard Nkili of Gabon, since 2 August 1997 it has been headed by General Augustin Mombo Moukagni of Gabon, assisted by a Chief of Staff (Colonel Talla Niang of Senegal), a Legal Counsel (Colonel Sizing Walla of Togo) and the heads of each of the six contingents.

COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

9. Since its arrival in Bangui in February 1997, MISAB, which is a neutral and impartial force, has been of considerable help in creating the climate of security which has emerged over a period of days, weeks and months. After many operations designed to deter and respond to flagrant provocations, it has managed to contain the organized crime, hold-ups and other armed robberies which had sown terror in the city of Bangui and in the country's interior.

10. MISAB was deployed to complement the actions of the various security services, which had been weakened by the rebellion.

11. Pursuant to its mandate, the International Monitoring Committee maintains constant contact with the various Central African authorities to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Bangui Agreements. In this connection, it is regularly consulted both by the President of the Republic and Head of State and by the Prime Minister and Head of Government, as well as by the National Assembly, on a considerable number of issues concerning the life of the Central African nation.

12. The International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements, acting on behalf of MISAB and/or on its own behalf, maintains regular contacts with international organizations, including UNDP and foreign diplomatic missions based in Bangui, with a view to requesting their diplomatic, financial and material support for mediation initiatives in the Central African Republic.

DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

13. At the time of the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou in December 1996, Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic, was in the throes of a fratricidal conflict. This attracted the attention of the heads of State, who immediately delegated four of their number in response to the request made at the Summit by the President of the Central African Republic, Ange-Félix Patassé, through his Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, Michel Gbezera-Bria (currently Prime Minister).

14. The four heads of State delegated to Bangui (President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, President Idriss Deby of Chad and President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali) succeeded, after difficult negotiations, in obtaining a truce, and called on the loyalist forces and the rebels, as a temporary measure, to maintain their respective positions as at the date of signature of the truce.

15. At the request of the mediator, and with the agreement of the Conference on Consensus-building and Dialogue, held in Bangui from 11 to 16 January 1997, the above-mentioned four heads of State decided to send an inter-African force with logistical support from France. This force, known as the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements, includes, in addition to troops from Gabon, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali (the countries members of the

International Mediation Committee), troops from Senegal and Togo, as a result of the decision of President Abdou Diouf and President Gnassingbé Eyadema to contribute to this gesture of African solidarity.

16. The activities of MISAB are governed by the mandate assigned to it by the heads of State concerned (see document S/1997/561). These daily activities are many and complex, and can be summed up as actions aimed at preventing confrontation between the two main forces in question: the loyalists of the Central African Armed Forces and the former rebels.

17. The MISAB force currently consists of six contingents with a strength of 796 soldiers (officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks), distributed as follows:

Burkina Faso	114
Mali	113
Senegal	153
Togo	120
Gabon	149
Chad	147

18. Owing to the development of organized crime, with the passive or active complicity of the former rebels, the activities of MISAB have been extended, with the agreement of the parties concerned, to operations to maintain security in the various neighbourhoods. In a city divided into zones controlled by either loyalists or former rebels, MISAB emerged, after the withdrawal of the French operational assistance units, as the only force that could circulate everywhere; thus, it was even called upon to perform social and humanitarian functions.

19. MISAB receives logistical support from the following sources:

(a) Participating States: Each State with troops in Bangui provides its personnel (officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks) with their regular pay and supplies them with weapons;

(b) France: France, which was an observer of the Bangui Agreements, agreed to provide logistical support to the various contingents as follows:

- Payment of the soldiers' total food allowance and daily subsistence allowance at the rates currently applicable to Central African military personnel;
- Payment of rents for the buildings used by military personnel and the MISAB Command;
- Provision of tactical and support vehicles for the force;
- Supply of fuel and vehicle maintenance;
- Supply of office equipment.

An overall evaluation of the cost of deploying MISAB in Bangui cannot be conducted until the end of the mission. However, taking all expenses into account, the cost of the logistical support provided to MISAB by France amounts to some 350 million CFA francs per month, or about $600,000;

(c) Central African Government: Vehicles for use by command personnel;

(d) Organization of African Unity (OAU): Special grant in the amount of $40,000 in March 1997 to assist the various contingents. A second special grant of $60,000 has been made jointly to the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB.

20. Since the signing of the Truce Agreement of 28 June 1997 and the Ceasefire Agreement of 2 July 1997, the following weapons have been deposited at the residence of the Ambassador of France in Bangui for surrender to the International Monitoring Committee and MISAB:

Heavy weapons:

120-mm mortars	Surrendered:	2 out of a total of 4
81-mm mortars	Surrendered:	4 out of a total of 15
60-mm mortars	Surrendered:	7 out of a total of 19
14.5-mm machine-guns	Surrendered:	5 out of a total of 6
12.7-mm machine-guns	Surrendered:	1 out of a total of 3
75-mm recoilless guns	Surrendered:	2 out of a total of 2
73-mm anti-tank rocket launchers	Surrendered:	62 out of a total of 67
Rocket-propelled grenades	Surrendered:	4 out of a total of 11
Total:	Surrendered:	87 out of a total of 107 (81.30 per cent)

Light weapons:

Handguns	Surrendered:	2 out of a total of 96
Sub-machine guns	Surrendered:	209 out of a total of 456
Assault rifles	Surrendered:	150 out of a total of 552
MAS 36 rifles	Surrendered:	349 out of a total of 1,133
Light machine-guns	Surrendered:	38 out of a total of 67
.30-calibre machine-guns	Surrendered:	13 out of a total of 17
Total:	Surrendered:	761 out of a total of 2,201 (34.43 per cent)

21. In the course of the various operations conducted by MISAB, and particularly during the confrontations of 22 and 23 March and 20 to 26 June, the force suffered the following losses:

- 6 dead (3 Chadian soldiers, 2 Gabonese soldiers and 1 Senegalese soldier)

- 20 wounded (13 Chadian soldiers, 5 Senegalese soldiers, 1 Malian soldier and 1 Gabonese soldier).

22. Since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 2 July 1997, MISAB has participated, on the basis of a consensus, in joint security patrols consisting of MISAB personnel, loyalists and rebels in all areas of the city of Bangui.

23. Moreover, the Technical Commission on Disarmament, presided over by Lieutenant-Colonel Evariste Martial Konzzale, Minister to the Office of the Minister for Territorial Administration, who is responsible for public security and disarmament, has intensified his awareness-raising activities thorough a methodically organized campaign to recover the rest of the weapons.

24. The Security Council's adoption of resolution 1125 (1997) had a catalytic effect on developments in the situation in the Central African Republic. The group of 11 opposition political parties, which had decided to suspend, as from 6 May 1997, the participation in the Government of the ministers belonging to its ranks, met with the Prime Minister and Head of Government in the presence of the Committee on 9 August 1997 and confirmed, in a joint communiqué, that it has ended the suspension. This will allow the Government of Action in Defence of Democracy, which is a type of government of national union, to be reconstituted.

25. In addition, President Patassé, in order to expedite the process of national reconciliation, presided over an important meeting on Tuesday, 12 August 1997, which brought together the entire Central African political community, the Government (with the participation of all members of the International Monitoring Committee) and a delegation from the MISAB Command. This meeting, which launched a new era in the country's political life (that of a resolute march towards peace), will be followed by others after the Government has been reconstituted.

Conclusions

26. The current experience with the Central African crisis is unique, and is all the more stimulating in that it is unlike any previous experience. The African mediation in Bangui, with its strengths and weaknesses, gives an idea of what Africans can do to settle internal conflicts on their continent. However, it is important to point out that, owing to the insufficiency of the African countries' own resources, logistical support from the international community, along the lines of the support which France has provided to MISAB and which remains open to contributions from all other States, remains a necessity.

27. The adoption of resolution 1125 (1997), which was hailed by the entire Central African political community, the whole of Africa and the international community, is perceived as a recognition of the beneficial role being played by MISAB in synergy with the International Monitoring Committee to supervise the implementation of the Bangui Agreements.